requirement. Further, the adoption of Service Area Approach (SAA) to rural lending under which each bank branch is expected to cover 15 to 25 villages ensured that the banking needs of every village in the country, including those in remote areas, is adequately taken care of.

(c) At present banks which are financially sound are permitted by RBI to open new branches.

**Evasion of Excise Duty on Globally Funded Projects**

3161. SHRI K.B. KRISHNAMURTHY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether large-scale excise duty evasion has been detected by the Directorate General of Excise Investigation on goods supplied to globally funded projects/institutions like UN, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, FAO, WHO and Asian Development Bank, etc.;

(b) whether the Central Board of Excise and Customs has been sounded to this effect; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Central Excise authorities to unravel the racket?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Cases of central excise duty evasion have been detected in respect of supplies to certain globally funded projects.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Cases have been booked against the suppliers concerned and necessary action, in accordance with law, is being taken to recover the duty evaded.